its plan 250 scheme only in respect of landline connections to the senior citizens. The rebates include 25% on rent and 25% on installation charges.

(b) Yes, Sir. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, is not granting such rebate to the senior citizens holding land line telephone connection, living in NCR town of Faridabad, Gurgaon and Ghaziabad for the following reasons:—

(i) BSNL is an independent entity working in stiff competitive environment with other private operators.

(ii) BSNL has 'Sulabh Plan' for basic telephony where rental is substantially lower than MTNL varying from Rs. 99/- to Rs. 160/- per month depending on exchange system capacity. This can be availed by senior citizens.

(iii) Even in general tariff plans of BSNL in basic telephony, the rental varies from Rs. 50/- per month to Rs. 180/- per month for exchange systems capacity upto 1 lakh lines.

(iv) The bona fide use of concessional telephone cannot be restricted to senior citizens only in the family.

Provision of land line connections in Jammu and Kashmir

2251. SHRI T. S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that mobile phone services are not available in various border areas of Jammu and Kashmir at present due to security reasons or otherwise;

(b) whether Government propose to provide adequate land line telephone connections in such areas in near future; and

(c) if so, the areas selected for the purpose and status of progress made to provide landline connections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) At present, fixed line telephone exchanges in the following border towns/villages are working:—

Mendhar, Poonch, Mandi, Sundarbani, Nowshera, Manjakote, R.S. Pora, Marh, Khour, Bishna, Vijaypur, Samba, Hiranagar, Barnoti, Ghagwal, Karnah, Uri, Boniyar, Gurez, Rohama, Tangdar, Kralpora, Trehgam, Sogam, Khalsi, Nobra, Drass, Shakar, Nyome and Chiktan.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has planned to provide landline connections according to waiting list in these towns.

WLL and MARR based telephones in Uttaranchal

†2252. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of telephones based on WLL and MARR systems in Uttaranchal;

(b) whether there is any proposal regarding conversion of MARR system based telephones into WLL system; and

(c) if so, by when this work would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, the number of telephones based on WLL and MARR in Uttaranchal are 23040 and 952 respectively.

(b) Yes, Sir. All the MARR based telephones (village public telephone) are proposed to be replaced by WLL technology.

(c) The work is proposed to be completed progressively by June 2006.

Submarine cable links

2253. SHRIMATI S. G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's international leased lines are five times more expensive;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that new submarine cable would bring 40-50 per cent annual price decline for international connectivity from India; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.